

Frank Vera III  
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January 2, 2019  
By Email: [hq.foia@epa.gov](mailto:hq.foia@epa.gov)

Freedom of Information Act Request  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (Mail code 2310A)  
Washington, DC 20460  
(202) 566-1667

**Please process this request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.**

Dear FOIA Officer:

I request a complete and unredacted copy, printout, or export of **all satellite images, aerial photographs, AND analysis of the satellite images, aerial photographs of the EPA Superfund site CA2570024453 (former George Air Force Base, CA) and sounding area.**

**Please conduct a comprehensive search for the requested records in possession of the US EPA, US Government archive, and US Government contractor.**

I would like to receive the information electronically, by secure download if available, e-mail attachment, CD-ROM or thumb drive if not.

I agree to pay reasonable fees for the processing of this request up to \$25. Please notify me before incurring any expenses more than \$25.

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## Record Search

When processing this request, please note that the D.C. Circuit has previously held that agencies have a duty to construe the subject material of FOIA requests liberally to ensure responsive records are not overlooked. See *Nation Magazine, Washington Bureau v. U.S. Customs Service*, 71 F.3d 885, 890 (D.C. Cir. 1995).

In line with the guidance issued by the Department of Justice ("DOJ") on 9 September 2008 to all federal agencies with records subject to FOIA, agency records that are currently in the possession of a US Government archive or contractor for purposes of records management remain subject to FOIA. Please ensure that your search complies with this clarification on the effect of Section 9 of the OPEN Government Act of 2007 of the definition of a "record" for purposes of FOIA. In addition, the US EPA should not interpret this request to exclude correspondence sent to outside third parties. Please also consider this letter an affirmative rejection of any limitation of your search to US EPA originated records.

## **Redaction**

In excising material, please “black out” rather than “white out” or “cut out.” Additionally, any reasonably segregable portion of a responsive record must be provided to me after redaction of any allegedly exempt material, as the law requires. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). If this request is denied, in full or in part, please cite the exemptions pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(b) that justify the denial. If an exemption applies, however, please consider exercising the agency’s discretionary release powers to disclose the information.

## **Request for Fee Waiver**

FOIA mandates a waiver or reduction of fees associated with a request if "disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii).

The former Victorville Army Air Field/George Air Force Base, CA, is a Superfund site “EPA Superfund ID: CA2570024453” and is one of the most contaminated sites in the country. Approximately one hundred thousand men, women, and children were forced to work, live, and go to school on George AFB. Given the nature and extent of the contamination, the number of completed exposure pathways (CEPs), that we had repeated and prolonged exposure to elevated levels of the many toxic substances at George AFB it is unreasonable to believe that thousands of us were not adversely affected by the contaminants.

## **About George AFB, CA - Hazardous Toxic & Radioactive Waste (George AFB - HTRW)**

I (Frank Vera) am the owner and operator of the website, Facebook groups, and Newsletter “George AFB – HTRW.” George AFB – HTRW’s primary function is to act as a watchdog public advocacy group<sup>(1)</sup> for those who were injured by their exposure to the contamination at George AFB and ensure the Veterans and their family members have the necessary documentation of the numerous Completed Exposure Pathways (CEPs) at George AFB so the Veteran can win their VA and Social Security disability case. We have had several member win there VA C&P claims for toxic injuries that were the result of their exposure to toxins at George AFB with documents obtained and posted on the website and Facebook pages. To accomplish this objective, I file FOIA request and MDRs to get the necessary records released; or declassified and released and published on our website. ([www.GeorgeAFB.Info](http://www.GeorgeAFB.Info))

We (the members of George AFB – HTRW) are a loose-knit collation of over one thousand members that were injured or lost a family member(s) because of our/their exposure to the contamination at George AFB. Our website [www.GeorgeAFB.Info](http://www.GeorgeAFB.Info) routinely gets over 7,000 unique visitors a month, has over one hundred articles that summarize records that were released under FOIA with links to the gibibytes of original documents that released; or were declassified and released. The released records and articles are ALWAYS provided for free and NEVER behind a paywall.

## **FOIA and George AFB miscarriages in the news**

There are 200 to 300 families that lost from 1 to 7 children at or shortly after leaving GAFB. This number includes the girls that grew up in the Base Housing that could not carry a child to full term (miscarriage and stillbirth) after their exposure to the toxins at George AFB. The issue of the extremely high miscarriage rate at George AFB was discussed in several news articles including “Why women were told ‘Don’t get pregnant at George Air Force Base’” Military Times and Air Force Times, June 20, 2018. This just one of dozens of news articles (2) that were published using information declassified and/or released under FOIA about the

and about the health issues that plague the military personnel, their family members, and surrounding communities that are the result of their exposure to “toxic substance(s)” at George AFB.

### **In closing**

If my request is denied in whole or part, please justify all withholdings by reference to specific exemptions and statutes, as applicable. For each withholding please also explain why your agency “reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by an exemption” or why “disclosure is prohibited by law[.]” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A)(i).

I have made a reasonable prima facie case (5) for a fee waiver, ask that your honor my request and grant the fee waiver. I have shown why I want the records, what I intended to do with them, to whom and how I plan on distributing the records to, that past FOIA releases have resulted in news articles in prominent publications, and helped Veterans win their VA disability case enabling them to qualify for medical care and compensation for their Service-Connected disabilities.

In the event that fees cannot be waived, I would be grateful if you would inform me of the total charges in advance of fulfilling my request. I would prefer the request filled electronically, by e-mail attachment if available or CD-ROM if not. If I am denied a “Public Interest Fee Waiver,” I will pay “under protest” and I expressly reserve my rights to appeal your decision.

I look forward to receiving the complete and unredacted documents within twenty (20) business days. If you wish to discuss this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at 209-984-5517.

Thank you for processing this FOIA request.



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1. Better Gov't Ass'n v. Department of State, 780 F.2d 86, 88-89 (D.C. Cir. 1986) (fee waiver intended to benefit public interest watchdogs)
  2. Attachment 1 – A partial list of news articles
  3. Friends of the Coast Fork v. U.S. Dept. of Interior, 110 F 3d. 53, 55 (9th Cir. 1997).

## **Attachment 1**

- [Military Base Has Legacy of Pesticide and Other Toxic Chemical Exposure and Harm Beyond Pesticides](#)  
September 19, 2018
- [Victorville prison where immigrant detainees held built atop toxic Superfund site](#)  
By Scott Schwebke and Beau Yarbrough  
Orange County Register – August 13, 2018
- [How Prisons Are Poisoning Their Inmates](#)  
By: Michael Waters  
The Outline – July 23, 2018
- [Why women were told ‘Don’t get pregnant at George Air Force Base’](#)  
By: Tara Copp  
Military Times – June 20, 2018
- [Bombs in Your Backyard – George AFB](#)  
by Lena Groeger, Ryann Grochowski Jones, & Abraham Lustgarten  
ProPublica – November 30, 2017
- [Pentagon dumps tons of hazardous waste yearly without disclosing pollution harm](#) – Video  
RT America – August 28, 2017
- [The military’s toxic water problem](#) – Podcast  
By Jimmy Williams speaks with Adrienne St. Clair  
DecodeDC – August 21, 2017
- [Military bases’ contamination will affect water for generations](#)  
By Corinne Roels, Briana Smith and Adrienne St. Clair  
News 21 – August 14, 2017
- [George Air Force Base, Victorville, California](#) – Video  
By Corinne Roels, Briana Smith and Adrienne St. Clair  
News 21 – August 8, 2017
- [Why The EPA Is Allowing Contaminated Groundwater To Go Untreated](#)  
By Dan Ross  
Newsweek – March 9, 2017
- [Novel Strategy for Dealing with Toxic Contamination: Do Nothing](#)  
By Daniel Ross  
FairWarning – February 28, 2017
- [Air Force’s High Desert Legacy: Untold & Unknown Contamination Levels](#)  
By Daniel Ross  
San Bernardino County Sentinel – April 23, 2016

- ["I'm Mad as Hell": Air Force Members Blame Health Horrors on Toxic Exposure](#)  
By Daniel Ross  
Truthout – April 17, 2016
- [Air Force Less Than Clear On Extent Of Nuclear Contamination At GAFB](#)  
By Mark Gutglueck  
San Bernardino County Sentinel – May 17, 2015
- [Lahontan: SCLA project unsafe](#)  
By Shea Johnson  
The Daily Press – December 25, 2014
- [The Real Deal with Jim Fetzer podcast](#)  
By Jim Fetzer – July 26, 2013
- [The view from being thrown under the bus](#)  
By Ed Mattson  
Veterans Today – June 23, 2013
- [Part II...The view from under the bus](#)  
By Ed Mattson  
Veterans Today – June 30, 2013
- [GAFB Airman \[Frank Vera\] Exposed to Radiation](#)  
By Mark Gutglueck  
Desert Mountain Express – July 1, 1994
- [Ex-officers: Air Force lied about range](#)  
The Daily News – May 7, 1990
- [Low-level radioactive dump discovered at George AFB](#)  
By Willian Couey  
The Daily Press – September 1, 1985